Minutes			
Title of Meeting:	Welfare Sector Transparency Board (WSTB)		
Date:	29th June 2017	**Time:**	12.15 – 14.15
Attendees:	See list below		
Apologies:	See list below		

Agenda item 1 – Introduction and Welcome

Charlie Boundy (CB) welcomed everyone to the meeting and brought members up to date with the merger of Technology and Business Transformation groups in DWP to form Digital group.

CB confirmed that the WSTB is not currently a mandatory requirement; comments were invited during AOB regarding content and timescales for future meetings.

The group introduced itself as there were some new members/ representatives.

Agenda item 2 – Overview of the Government Data Programme, Cabinet Office

Nick Halliday (NH) gave an overview of the current status of the Government Data Programme and the new Ministers in Cabinet Office.

NH explained that the impact/effect on the Open Data agenda is not known at this stage. The government's election manifesto had a number of commitments about Open Data such as a wish to remain a world leader in open data. The Cabinet Office will be working over the summer to understand what these commitments mean in more detail.

NH outlined the growth of Government Digital Services (GDS) groups, including those responsible for data.gov.uk, Registers and the Digital Academy, and GDS strategies to help make better use of data across government.

NH highlighted a number of groups and networks which promote and maintain momentum in Open Data/Transparency and data sharing, including work on ethics and how more focused and immediate data exchanges to replace bulk data sharing (e.g. immediate automated yes/no access to MOT data as part of road tax applications) can be replicated across government. Keith Dugmore (KD) commented that this would be of interest outside government too.

NH also outlined some of the work being done to improve data.gov.uk, which government departments are helping to test. Gillian Hall (GH) is involved in this testing on behalf of DWP (**Action Point 44**).

Board members were interested in the work being done on Registers; NH offered to provide links to the relevant page on data.gov.uk (**Action Point 45**).

Agenda item 3 – DWP Statistical Progress Update

Tom Davies (TD) provided an update on developments and improvements to DWP Statistical Services products.

TD explained that our dissemination framework and strategy is based on the Government Statistical Service's categories of users (Enquiring Citizen, Information Forager and Expert User); data is now disseminated in various formats aimed at the general needs of these groups, with interactive web-based data visualisations and succinct publications on Gov.uk, and raw data available on our Stat-Xplore portal.

TD outlined the importance of the data on Stat-Xplore, including achieving efficiency savings within DWP itself, from responding to Freedom of Information requests to use by our Data Scientists. TD also outlined the recent upgrades to Stat-Xplore and the new data it contains following the decommissioning of the Tabulation Tool.

The new data visualisations produced within the Statistical Services utilising the new API functionality were then discussed with Gemma Kirk (GK) providing a demonstration of two of the products. KD commented that the visualisations would work well to assist initial understanding, prompting further digging elsewhere to fully understand the links/correlations.

Consensus among board members was that the layered approach is good, as we must bear different user needs in mind.

NH commented that some thought should be given how users access open data online. When, for example, Open Knowledge have assessed government open data they have removed marks if there is a log-in or a registration feature. There are ways to collect insights on users that do not involve such features. TD explained that users can still access Stat Xplore without logging in if they prefer. The board discussed the balance between making data fully open and being able to measure usage so that useful improvements can be made.

Rachel Remedios (RR) commented that she/CAB find Stat-Xplore really useful but would benefit from some further details regarding what can be done using the API. GK to contact RR with further information (**Action Point 46**).

Agenda item 4 – Universal Credit (UC)

Iain Wright (IW) provided an update on Universal Credit.

There has been good progression with Full Service rollout, which remains on track for a significant ramp-up in Oct 2017 and completion by July 2018. 600,000 people are currently claiming UC, and growing fast.

UC moved to a new data and MI platform one year ago. The core dataset for DWP analysts contains highly complex data including free text, and a lot of digital data now flows back and forth between customers & the Department. The focus remains on operational delivery; there was only limited operational MI available in the early months of UC Full Service and this has driven the current data agenda as improved MI is needed for policy analysis/performance.

Statistical publications of various data items are due by the end of year.

Natalie Jones (NJ) asked if the data platform links to Stat-Xplore. IW confirmed that it does not have an automated link at this stage, but UC statistics are published on Stat-Xplore.

Agenda item 5 – Data Science in DWP

Charlie Boundy (CB) provided an update on the work of the Data Science function, including work done to:
- Make data available to communities in DWP, including frontline, for decision making purposes; 3 specific Apps have been created for the policy-making community in DWP
- Assist Fraud & Error prevention
- Inform service design by using web analytics and deeper questions into customer journeys

CB also provided an update on the progress with DWP's Churchill tool for policy-makers and future goals to release it as open tool and embed more data & analytics into it. CB discussed how it is maturing with go-live in July for ONS, HMT & DWP followed by public release if all goes well.

There is also the possibility that the coding itself can be made open for wider re-use.

Discovery work into how data science can assist with the personalisation of services to a claimant is underway such as in rapid orientation for both Work Coaches and claimants. Ethical considerations will be integral into this work to ensure that the service is helpful but not intrusive.

CB also confirmed that a digital signing regime is in the pipeline, with testing in 2018.

KD commented on the importance of using data to make quicker decisions and improve services which benefits everyone.

Judith Jones (JJ) commented on the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) & forthcoming Data Protection Bill which will affect digital/data use, balancing complex benefits to society with increased attention to privacy.

Agenda item 6 – Digital Economy Act (DEA) 2017

NH provided a short overview of the Digital Economy Act 2017 Section 5 Digital Government which relates to data sharing. One key feature is that the powers are permissive, which means public authorities (registration officials in relation to the civil registration powers) have the discretion whether to share data or not.

He also mentioned that the key activity is now the drafting of the Four Codes of Practice which must be consistent with the Information Commissioner's data sharing code of practice. The four codes cover
•   Data Sharing Code of Practice: Public Service Delivery, Debt and Fraud;
•   Data Sharing Code of Practice: Civil Registration;
•   Code of Practice and Accreditation Criteria: Research
•   Data Sharing Statement and Code of Practice: Statistics.

It is likely that the public consultation on these Codes will start on 17 July with the government response being due in October.

JJ commented that the ICO has followed the bill/Act closely through parliament; the ICO is conscious that there should be some alignment between the proposed Codes of Practice and the Data Protection Codes of Practice to make everything clear. Under the GDPR, individuals will have more rights to know what is being done with their data.

The board broadly discussed the ethical issues of balancing openness and transparency to improve society with privacy.

NH to provide slides for members (**Action Point 47**).

AOB

KG suggested that we build in an agreement of the Minutes and review of the Action Points in future agendas.

CB asked the board for comments on the frequency of the meetings; it was suggested and agreed that the next should be held in approximately four months time.

Future Welfare Sector Transparency Board meeting dates
• **To be arranged for Oct/Nov 2017**

Welfare Sector Transparency Board – 29.06.17	
Attendees	
Charlie Boundy (chair)	DWP Digital, Data Science
Rachel Remedios	Citizens Advice (CA)
Natalie Jones	Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
Keith Dugmore	Demographics User Group
Judith Jones	Information Commissioners Office
Nick Halliday	Cabinet Office
Tom Davies	DWP Digital
Iain Wright	DWP Strategy UC Analysts
Gemma Kirk (secretariat)	DWP Digital
Gillian Hall (secretariat)	DWP Digital
Apologies	
Julie Hewitt	Equifax
Rick Wright	Employment Related Services Association (ERSA)